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Library Instruction and Ludonarrative Dissonance: Making Our Rules Fit Our Narrative

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Library Instruction and Ludonarrative Dissonance: Making Our Rules Fit Our Narrative

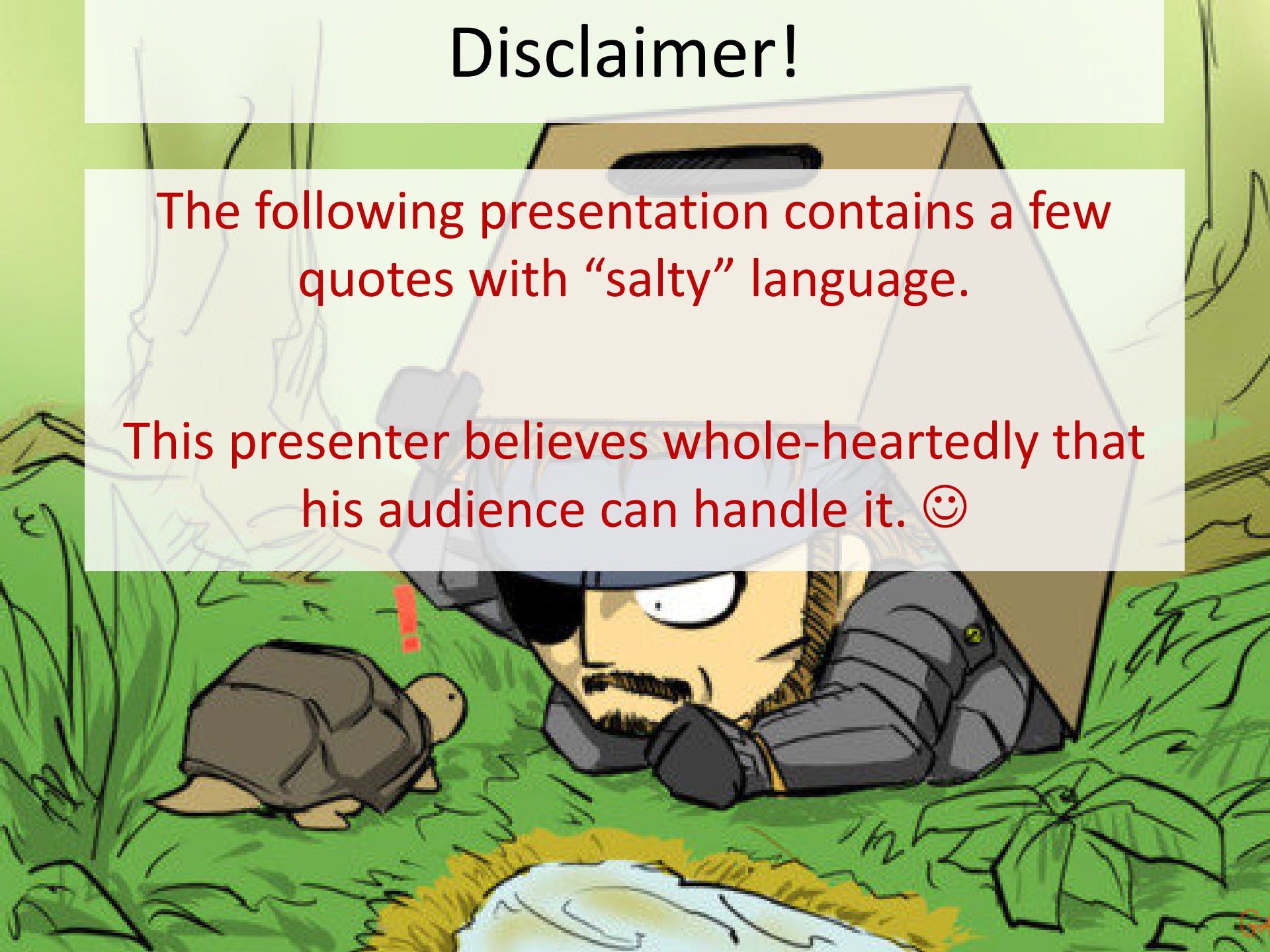
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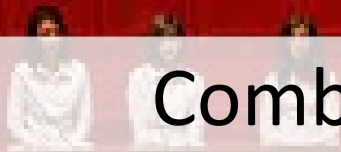
Bioshock Infinite, Irrational Games

Disclaimer!

The following presentation contains a few quotes with “salty” language.

This presenter believes whole-heartedly that his audience can handle it. 😊





Combining My Professions



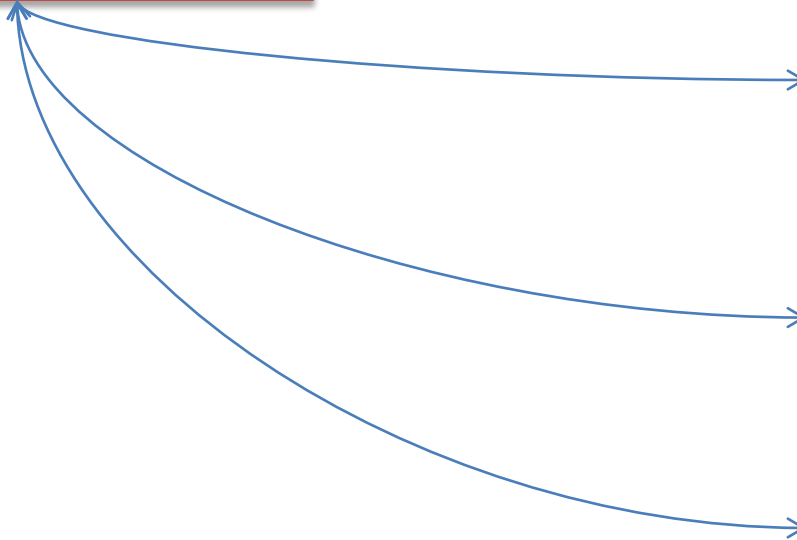
Music
Performance

Instruction

Clarity and Projection

Engagement

Analysis / Reflection



TIME

29:45

Combining My Interests



Super Hexagon, Terry Cavanagh

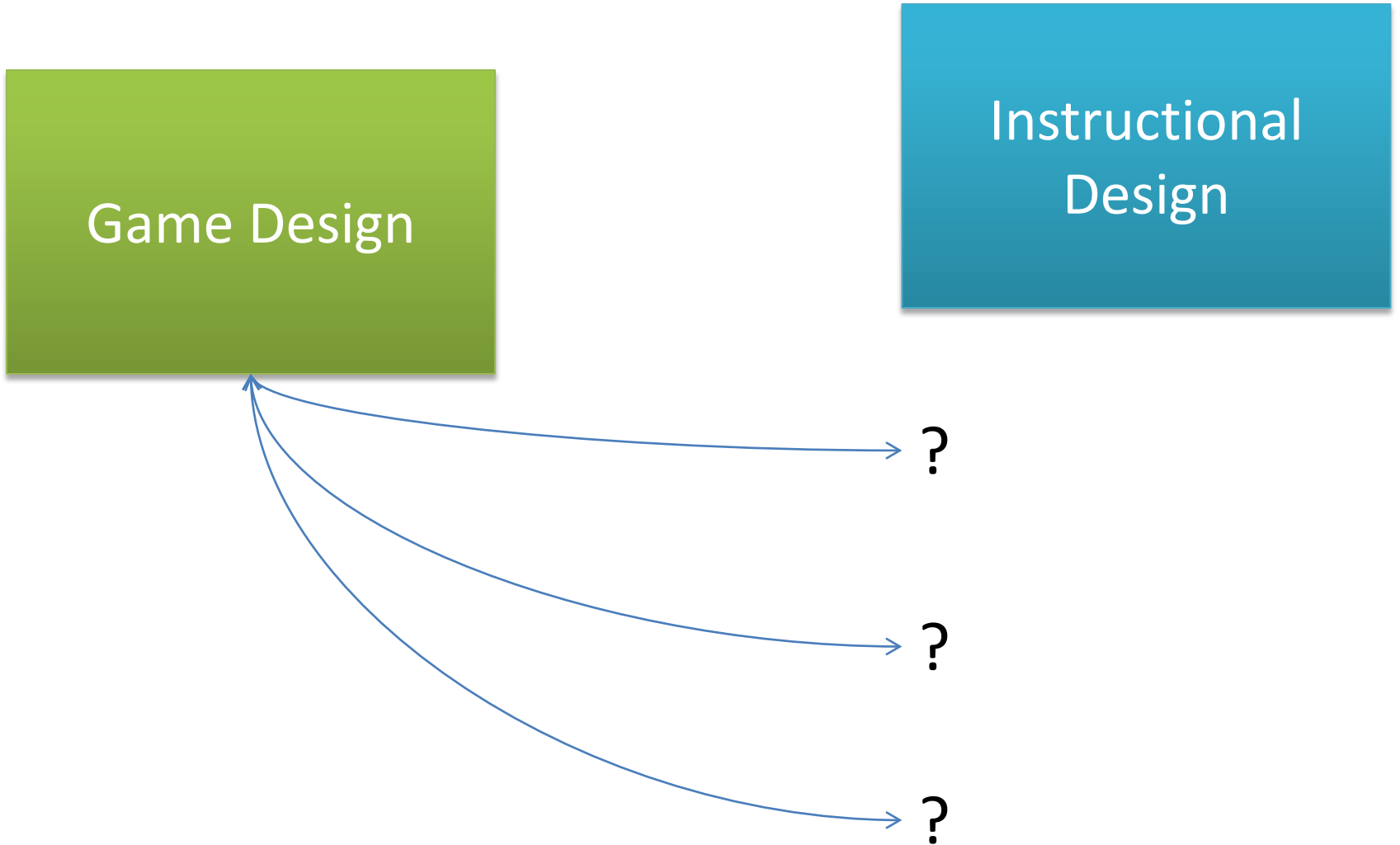
Game Design

Instructional
Design

?

?

?



Isn't this just “gamification?”

Ian Bogost, Chair in Media Studies and Professor of
Interactive Computing, Georgia Tech:

“Gamification is bullshit.”

MOUNTAIN DEW® & DORITOS TEAM UP WITH HALO® 4

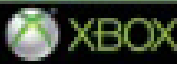
“More specifically, gamification is marketing bullshit, invented by consultants as a means to capture the wild, coveted beast that is videogames and to domesticate it for use in the grey, hopeless wasteland of big business, where bullshit already reigns anyway.”

Ian Bogost, “Gamification is Bullshit,

http://www.bogost.com/blog/gamification_is_bullshit.shtml

HALO 4

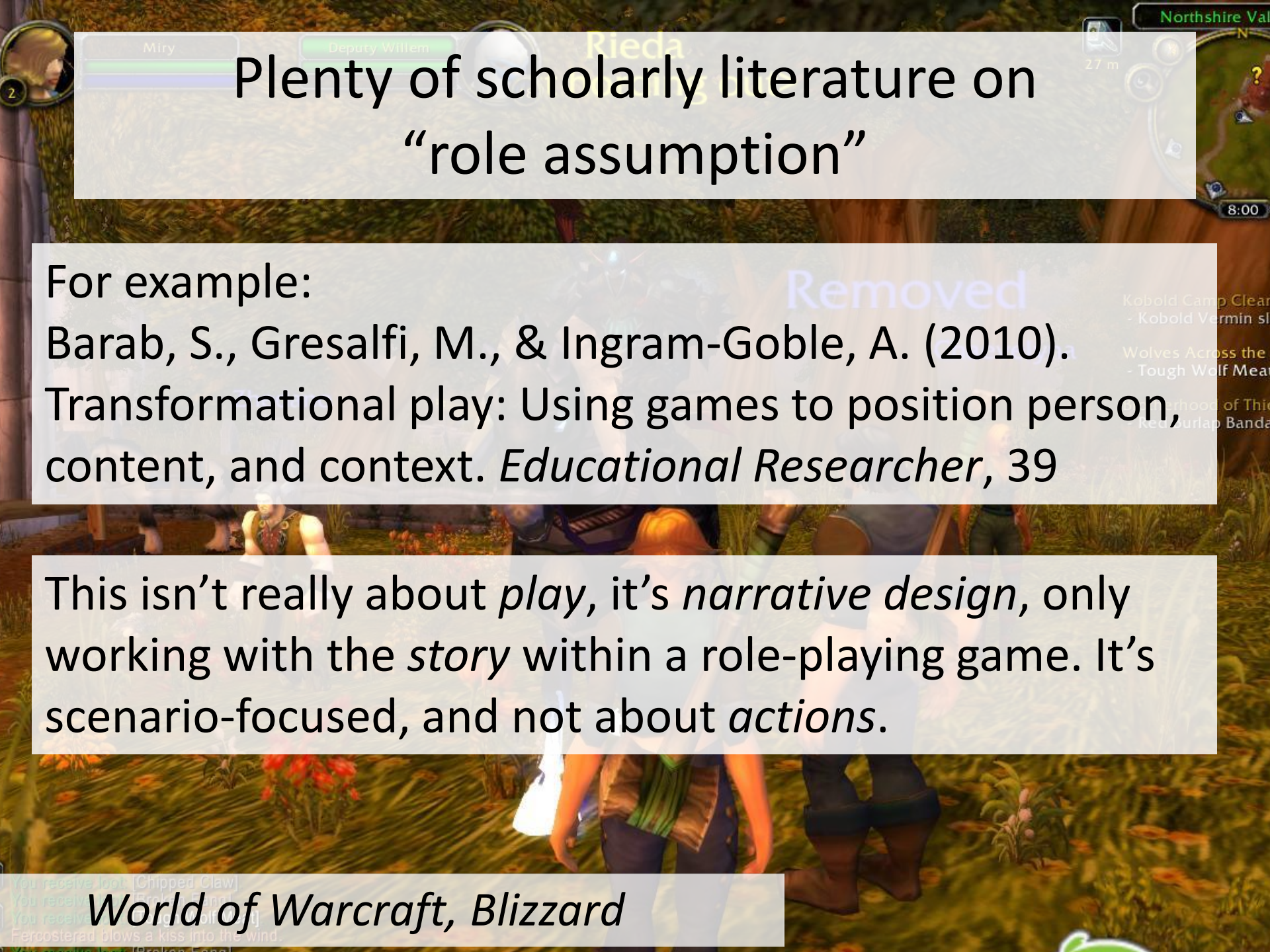
©2012 PepsiCo, Inc.



Wait, what?

The “Just add points” mindset isn’t about games. It’s often about framing past practices as something new.

- Exploitation in marketing
- Buzzwords and masks to justify current practices

The background of the slide is a screenshot from the game World of Warcraft. It shows a character in a forest setting. In the top left, there's a portrait of a character named 'Miry' with a health bar. Next to it is 'Deputy Willem'. In the top right, there's a mini-map showing the 'Northshire Valley' area. A distance marker '27 m' is visible. The word 'Rieda' is partially visible in the background. The overall scene is a lush, green forest with trees and foliage.

Plenty of scholarly literature on “role assumption”

For example:

Barab, S., Gresalfi, M., & Ingram-Goble, A. (2010).
Transformational play: Using games to position person,
content, and context. *Educational Researcher*, 39

This isn't really about *play*, it's *narrative design*, only
working with the *story* within a role-playing game. It's
scenario-focused, and not about *actions*.

World of Warcraft, Blizzard

Game
Design



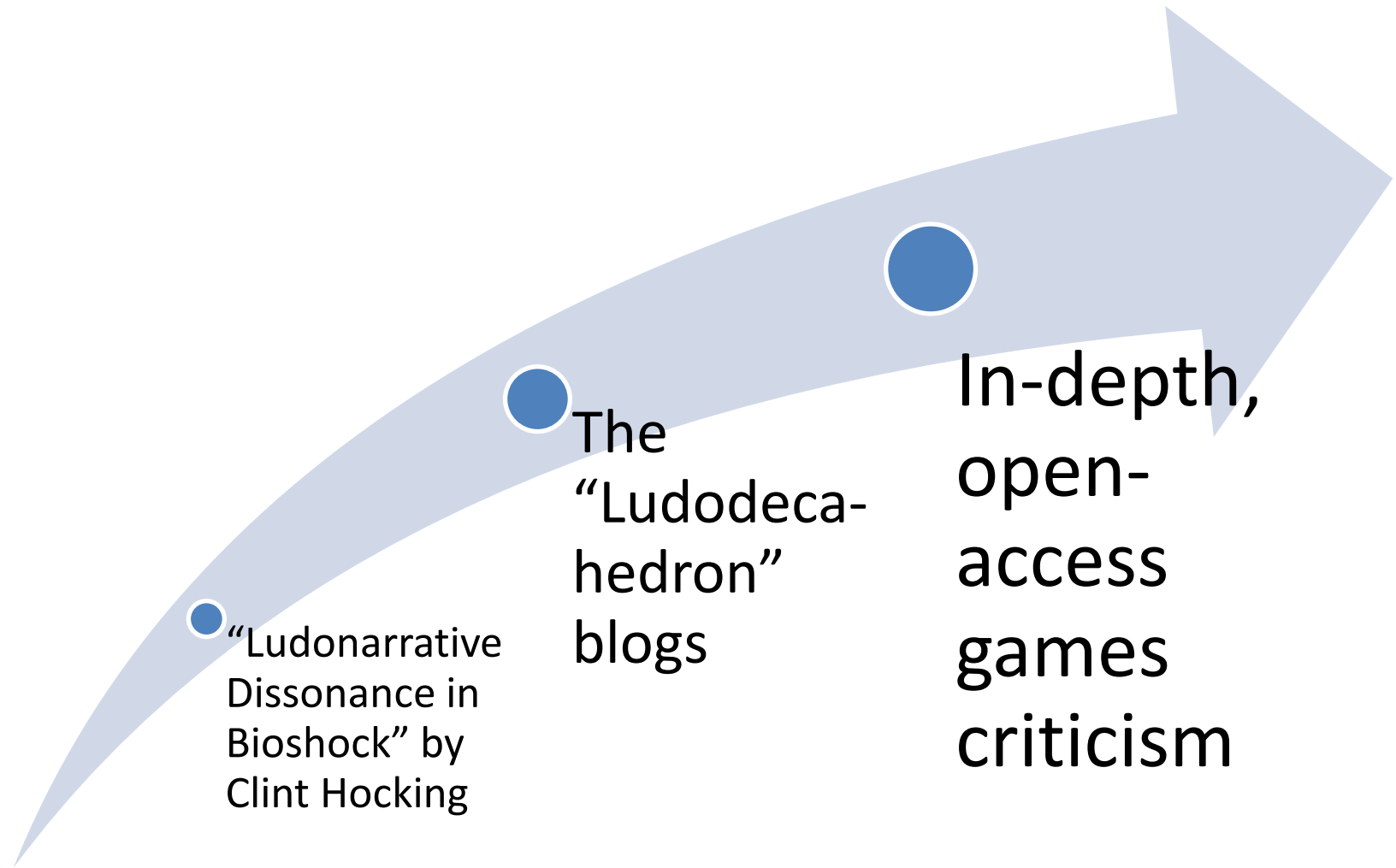
Instructional
Design

Play

is

Learning.

If not “gamification” or role literature, then what?



Games criticism FTW

- Games criticism addresses the “why” of games in the same way that literary criticism addresses the “why” of literature
- The gamification and role-playing movement only addressed the “what,” and barely scratched the surface
- Looking at game design and instructional design is highly qualitative

Ludonarrative Dissonance

Coined in Clint Hocking, "Ludonarrative Dissonance in Bioshock",
http://clicknothing.typepad.com/click_nothing/2007/10/ludonarrative-d.html

What's Ludonarrative Dissonance?

A distance or clash between the two contracts the game developer has with the player:



Narrative
Contract

&



Ludic
Contract

The values presented to the player through the game's story, setting, and characters

The values presented to the player through the rules of play

The “rules” of the game

Minority Report: Everybody Runs (2002)

Narrative: You are part of the Precrime Division of the police. You go on missions to prevent murders from happening in the near future. There hasn't been one murder in six years because of Precrime.

Play: When you enter a mission, you kick people ten feet across the room into hazardous materials or a fryolator, or just throw them off of skyscrapers. These people should all be dead. There is no reaction from the character when this violence happens.

Why did this happen?

- Lazy or rushed design (If it's a movie-licensed game, this is usually the case.)
- Lack of collaboration (the programmers, game designers, and story designers probably didn't talk much)
- When the issues are this obvious, there's a planning problem.

A typical argument...

Not enough money with the staff we have!
(Couldn't you have done a smaller-scale game?)

Not enough time with the assignment we were given!

(The movie studio may have forced the design and deadline on the team. This happens, but it shouldn't. The team should manage up if possible.)

Difficult Example: Bioshock

“Bioshock is a game about the relationship between freedom and power... It says, rather explicitly, that the notion that rational self-interest is moral or good is a trap, and that the ‘power’ we derive from complete and unchecked freedom necessarily corrupts, and ultimately destroys us.” –Clint Hocking

Saving the innocent characters in this game and being altruistic hurts you throughout the game, with no positive outcome whatsoever.

Why is this a difficult example?

It could be intentional, and up to the player to make the decision between making the game easier and being the better person. The narrative might be focused on self-reflection and not the protagonist.

When you have to nitpick to this depth, you've done a great job. Nothing's going to be perfect.

Information Literacy Instruction

Narrative Contract

“[Information literacy] enables learners to master content and extend their investigations, become more self-directed, and assume greater control over their own learning.”

ACRL, “Information Literacy Standards for Higher Education,”
<http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/informationliteracycompetency>

Examining Ludic Planning in basic library instruction

Focus on the actions (our substitute for “play”) in a library instruction session plan, and you may find the following:

“Lecture” Library Instruction



Ludic Contract

Students must listen to and follow the librarian during the lecture. The objective is for the student to pass the minimum requirements for their current assignment. The reward is a good grade.

By the way, here's a paper handout or Libguide link. You don't need to remember anything! Wait, no no no, Facebook is forbidden!

Typical “Hands-on instruction”

Ludic Contract

Students must listen to and follow the librarian during the lecture. The objective is for the student to pass the minimum requirements for their current assignment. By the way, here’s a paper handout or Libguide link.

...Well, that was a shorter lecture than usual! Get some of your homework done. Feel free to ask your professor course-specific questions, because your knowledge of the assignment affects your grade more than knowing this content.

A typical argument...

- **Not enough time! We must integrate instruction into the curriculum!**

Is time really the issue? Could you make the content more focused, shorten the scope, and address broader outcomes instead?

- **Students are lazy! It's Twitter's fault! (Kids these days!)**

If I observe a session where students lose engagement after five minutes or less, I've lost my engagement too.

**My qualitative goal:
How do I get to this in 50 minutes or less?**

**Narrative
Contract**

**(Or “Learning
Outcomes”)**

**Students will become masters of their own
learning through library content and become
self-directed researchers.**


Look at great game design!

Encourage discovery over telling a player what to do.

Make your game simple and focused enough that discovery can happen quickly.

Achieve that simplicity and focus through a well-thought-out set of rules.

Journey, thatgamecompany

A wide-angle photograph of a large, empty lecture hall. The room features tiered seating with rows of light-colored plastic chairs and attached wooden desks. The front of the hall is dominated by a large, blank white projection screen. Above the screen, the ceiling has several long, rectangular light fixtures. The side walls are covered in wood paneling. In the foreground, the backs of several rows of chairs are visible, showing the perspective of the seating arrangement. A small wooden table and some equipment are visible on the stage area in front of the screen.

Example: First-year students need to have five library sources in a paper about a particular career.

Typical planning...

Teach and demonstrate how to find:

- Monograph Books
- Reference Books
- Journal Articles
- News Articles
- Magazine Articles
- Trade Publications

Once everything is covered, then it's a block of hands-on instruction.

No, wait!

What if they're off-campus? What if they need to know when the library is open? What if they need to create a library account? Add:

- Webpage introduction
- EZProxy/GALILEO instructions
- Hours Pages
- Catalog account creation
- More! More! More! I can't miss anything!

TEACH ALL THE HUMANS!



TEACH ALL THE THINGS!

Ludic Planning

My current template: Alternate lecture, exploration, and discovery

- Lecture: Direct, set the rules
 - Exploration: Introduce the content
 - Discovery: Let students “play” with the resources and learn how stuff works.
- Encourage this quickly to keep everyone engaged.

Sample Introduction (5 minutes max.)

- Introduce yourself (1 minute max.)
- Website, Live Chat, and EZProxy (Anywhere Access) (2 minutes max.)
- Quick assignment introduction (2 minutes max.)

First source:

Occupational Outlook Handbook

- Get everyone up, meet at the front of the room, talk about why they need it, display the handbook, pass it around.
- Move everyone to a computer, have them access OOH online.
- Instruct students to find their selected job in the handbook, give a 2 minute deadline
- Make it clear that you will pick two people to share their findings.

A screenshot from the video game Dead Rising. A character is standing on a white box in a crowded, zombie-infested area. The background shows a large crowd of zombies and a sign that says "4.0m".

Isn't this a little frantic?

Sure!

**Is that worse than teaching 50
disengaged student zombies for almost
an hour?**

No!

Dead Rising, Capcom

SCORE



LEVEL



RATE



CHAINS



This is just one aspect...

- Theming
- Immersion
- Extrinsic and Intrinsic Rewards
- Inclusion
- Learning Curve
- On and on and on...



SPACE
INVADERS
EXTREME

Space Invaders Extreme, Taito



CHAIN

Could we do this without games?

Absolutely, but looking at why you plan they way you plan includes introducing connections to your interests, exploring. It's reflective and personal.

Looking at the what involves surveying the scholarly research first (did someone already do this?) and measuring the effectiveness of my methods after.